1529

Rumours that had been disseminated amongst the civilian population behind the lines soon spread into the camps where soldiers were awaiting their time to be flung into the shambles. The result was widespread disaffection, and here and there mutiny amongst the troops which at one time was so serious as to threaten revolution.

Mutiny breaks out

The French Chamber was in revolt against the High Command. The French Government demanded the resignation of General Nivelle. General Petain was appointed in his place. He was specially qualified to deal with the situation. He was a man of great calm and common sense, and it was probably known by this time throughout the Army that he was opposed to the attack which had miscarried with such heavy losses. The French soldiers knew, therefore, that General Petain's appointment was a guarantee that there would be no more of these sanguinary offensives which for three years had so recklessly squandered the youth of France in experiments or schemes prepared by Staffs, most of whom had never seen any actual fighting in or over the trenches.

Petain's tact, judgment, and firmness re-established confidence in the armies of France. But it meant that for attack on any considerable scale these armies had ceased at any rate for a whole Year to be an effective fighting

machine.

Appendix (see p. 1521). "The English attack at Arras on *9th* April, 1917, swept over our first three lines. The evening report revealed a dark picture. A ray appeared. The English did not know how to exploit the success to the full. A piece of luck, as so often before, I pressed the hand of my Quartermaster-General with the words,' We have lived through more critical times.'"

Field-Marshal von Hindenburg.